

Billings Public Schools, School Health Advisory Council Physical Activity Resolutions

Physical activity has been shown to improve cognitive function and reduce the risk of overweight and obesity in people of all ages. To curb the obesity epidemic, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recommend that children between the ages of 5 and 18 get one hour of vigorous physical activity each day and that at least half of this activity (30 minutes) be obtained during the school day.

In light of these recommendations, the Billings Public Schools School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) resolves that a concerted effort be made to provide more activity during and around the school day using the expertise of community partners such as the Billings YMCA, the students and faculty of the Montana State University, Billings Health and Human Performance Department, the Big Sky Fit Kids and Shape Up Montana programs.

Specifically, the SHAC recommends:

1. Walking and riding bikes to and from school should be encouraged. School administrators and parents should work together to insure safe routes to school. Resources such as a pedestrian tip sheet can be down loaded from the National Safe Routes to School website <http://www.saferoutesinfo.org>, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Transportation. School Board member and local Safe Routes to School Rep, Kathy Aragon, can provide additional information if needed.
2. Grammar school principals should insure that each student in the 1st-6th grades participates in a minimum of 30 minutes of physically active recess each school day, as recommended by the AAP and CDC. Additional recess time is desirable. Ideally students should have a mid-morning, lunch, and mid-afternoon recess period. A PE class can take the place of one recess.
3. Each grammar school should establish a before-school walking program commencing at the time students are allowed to arrive on campus each morning. Faculty members, aides, and staff should be encouraged to participate as well.
4. Physical activity should be incorporated into other curriculum whenever possible.
5. Billings School District 2 should adopt the Open Gym proposal put forth by Prof. Ernie Randolfi of Montana State University, Billings and supported by the Billings YMCA. Specifically, select grammar and/or middle school gyms chosen by SD-2 Activities Director, Dave Williams, will be available on weekends for family fitness programs. These programs will be jointly implemented and supervised by a Billings YMCA staff member selected by director, Paul Manning and a MSUB Health and Human Performances student under the direction of Prof. Ernie Randolfi. This Open Gym program should be piloted at one or two schools during the 2007-2008 school year with the intention of expanding the program the following year.

6. Every District 2 school should participate in the Shape Up Montana (for adults) and Fit Kids (for students) programs each spring. Assistance in establishing these programs can be provided by a MSUB Health and Human Performances student under the direction of professor Ernie Randolfi.
7. Increased intramural activities should be developed for high school students with their input.